

Jóvenes en Acción—Investing in Mexico's Future

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performance, and demonstrated basic knowledge of the English language.

The students spent their first two weeks in Vermont, and then split into five cities—Seattle, Chicago, Cleveland, Charlotte, and Baltimore—based on the theme of their project in order to develop specialized skills and meet with subject matter experts. The program concluded in Washington D.C. with visits with international organizations, State Department officials, and congressional representatives. The group will reunite at the half-way point for a mid-year conference to talk about their progress to date, share experiences and challenges, and discuss strategies for completing the projects.

The Jóvenes en Acción program is now well on its way to completing a second successful year. The sky is the limit for these young leaders. Upon returning to Mexico, they will face any number of challenges in implementing their projects, but they also have a newly formed network of mentors, peers, and supporters to help them along the way. As for the program itself, NAS anticipates funding Jóvenes en Acción again in 2012. •

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For further information

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Afghan Officials Graduate from Gender Justice Training: 11 government officials, including 2 women, successfully completed an INL-funded training course on the Afghan Law to Eliminate Violence Against Women (LEVAW). They will go on to staff the Attorney General's specialized VAW Units in Kabul and Balkh, and the Legal Aid Department at the Ministry of Justice.

Violence Against Women Units Picking Up Steam in Afghanistan

The Violence Against Women Units (VAW) show early signs of effectiveness. Since its launch March 2010, the Kabul VAW alone has received more than 570 cases and conducted six prosecutions resulting in five convictions, including one for murder. In addition, public awareness of the VAW units appears to be growing. The Kabul unit initiated more than 185 cases in the second quarter of 2011, up from 77 in the previous quarter.

Staffed by 11 Attorney General Office prosecutors, who receive technical assistance and training from the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) under an INL grant, the Kabul unit is dedicated to prosecuting the 22 criminal offenses defined under the Law to Eliminate Violence Against Women (LEVAW), which President Karzai passed by Presidential Decree in 2009.

According to VAW Unit Head Prosecutor Qudsia Niazi, her team “prosecutes crimes against women in order to do justice, showing that no individual is above the law. We are hopeful that our efforts will bring a positive change and will reduce violence against women in Afghanistan.”

Women have come from 21 different provinces to initiate cases, as awareness of the unit grows. Case load has increased due to word-of-mouth and official referrals. Afghan government entities, including the Ministry of Women's Affairs and law enforcement officials, were responsible for referring 16 percent of all cases. In addition to strengthening the Kabul VAW Unit, INL recently funded a new unit in Balkh. Those two will be soon followed by an approved expansion of six new provincial VAW Units, starting with Mazar-i-Sharif this fall. •

Kabul VAW Unit Head Prosecutor Qudsia Niazi (right) at a training event with Herat Chief Prosecutor Maria Bashir (left).



‘SPEAK OUT, NO FEAR’ Against Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Campaign

Ugandan public awareness campaign against domestic violence and child abuse has broken through traditional silence on a mounting social problem. Their campaign produced informational songs on the radio and rented large billboards clustered around the most densely visited portions of the capital, Kampala, visible to 400,000 people weekly. The INL-funded campaign brought together Uganda's businesses, police force, civil society organizations, and goodwill ambassadors. These ‘ambassadors’ included local celebrities and regular folk from diverse backgrounds including actors,

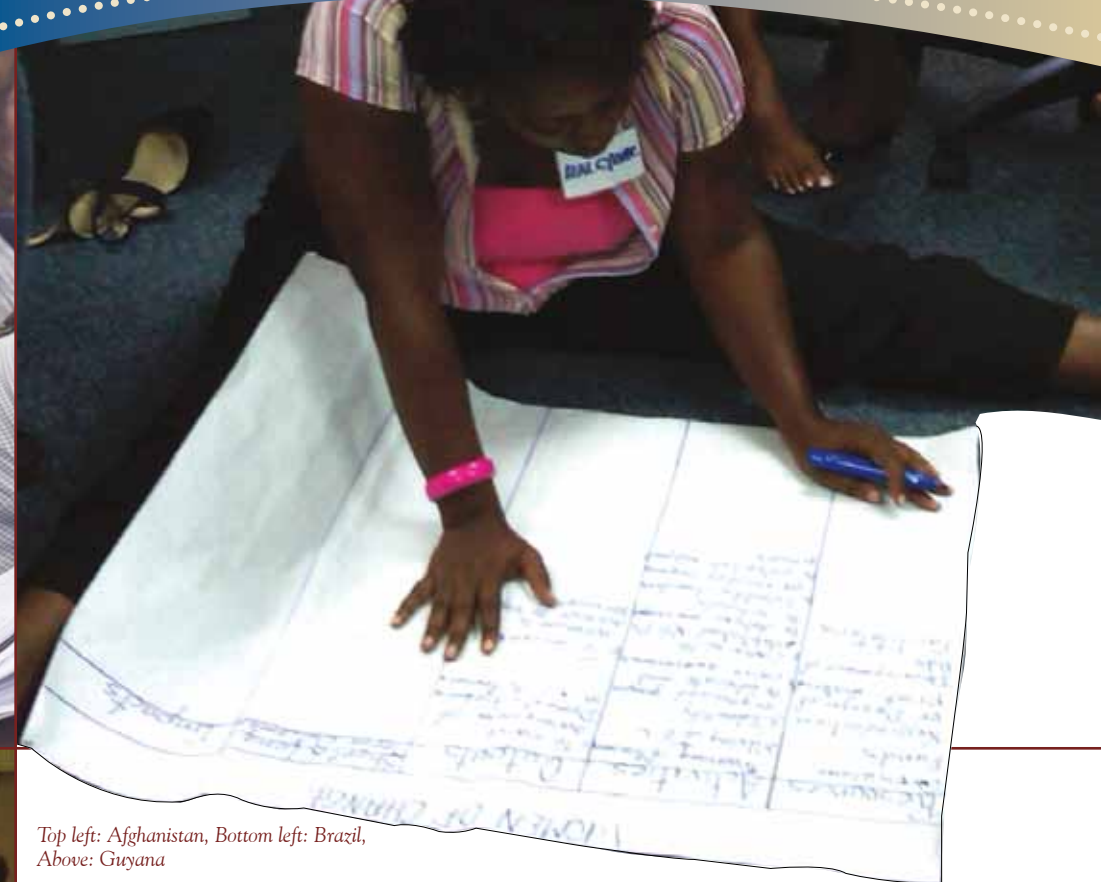
musical performing artists, and reality TV stars, to ‘speak out’ in the media against child defilement and domestic violence. The campaign's theme, ‘Speak Out, No Fear,’ visually featured these ambassadors in ads with ‘taped lips’ (with one end of the tape, slightly ripped off). Each ambassador also represented the demographic diversity of Uganda.



United States Department of State

INLbeat

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Top left: Afghanistan, Bottom left: Brazil, Above: Guyana

INL Reaches Out to Substance-Abusing Women and their Children

Numerous studies demonstrate that female substance abusers differ substantially from men. Women, especially those with children, face a unique set of psychological, social, and logistical barriers to treatment that must be addressed in order to facilitate recovery.

INL services and training are applying new strategies to address these differences. In mid-2007, INL spearheaded its commitment to excellence in women's treatment through the sponsorship of an expert panel, which presented a gender-specific curriculum known as GROW (*Guiding the Recovery of Women*). GROW continues in 2011 to be refined with ongoing advances in research to address the complex conditions faced by addicted women and their children, including pregnancy, domestic violence, co-occurring disorders and trauma.

The worldwide dissemination of the GROW curriculum is proceeding with INL's time-tested international demand reduction (IDR) program principles, including culturally relevant programming, measurement of program outcomes, and results-oriented

approaches. Gender-specific services have been launched in Guyana, Brazil, Ecuador, and most recently, South Africa, where the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA), has initiated a nationwide strategy for implementing women-specific issues into all existing prevention, treatment, training, and community development programs.

Similarly, through the Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Program (CPDAP), a major effort is also underway in war-torn Afghanistan, where treatment efforts must not only address severe addiction to opium, but also significant cultural barriers that discourage addicted women from seeking help for themselves or their children. These programs include a drug prevention program at 300 schools and 16 mosques, a public information campaign with radio spots, street theater and mobile exhibits, and 29 substance abuse treatment centers, including six for women and children. •

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Students share an evening in Washington DC and meet Ann Stock, Assistant Secretary of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State.

Jóvenes en Acción— Investing in Mexico's Future

Jóvenes en Acción (Youth in Action), a youth exchange program that focuses on developing young leaders in Mexico by engaging them in community service, was launched in 2010 under the leadership of then Ambassador Carlos Pascual. In its inaugural year, the program sent 50 students to the United States, where they spent five weeks developing leadership skills and learning how to implement community service projects back in their hometowns.

Now in its second year, Jóvenes en Acción received Merida Initiative support in 2011 and introduced Culture of Lawfulness (COL) as a key component of the program's content. The program was able to expand its reach in 2011 to 68 students, representing 15 Mexican states. The students applied in groups of three to five and were required to present a project proposal addressing themes such as bullying, domestic violence, substance abuse, gang violence, and social inclusion. Nearly 600 students applied, and the top teams were selected based on the proposals, academic

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Jóvenes in Action group.



NAS Bogota's Scholarship for Colombian Minorities into Police Academies

In 2009, the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, working closely with the Colombian National Police (CNP) launched the Beca ("scholarship") program, facilitating the entry of qualified Afro-Colombian and indigenous youth into one of four CNP academies, issuing scholarships for over 550 selectees so far.

Historically, Colombia has been an intensely fragmented country. Drug-related crime contributed significantly to a power vacuum and a lack of government representation in the peripheral regions of Colombia, away from the capital, particularly along the Pacific Coast. As a result, communities in these areas suffered from a lack of economic and educational opportunities, leading residents of these communities to turn to the cultivation of coca or cocaine trafficking. Others resorted to joining illegal armed groups, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

With this in mind, the program specifically targets young Afro-Colombians and indigenous populations from the most affected regions. The Beca Program provides these students with the golden opportunity for higher education, as well as careers in government service. This year, NAS Bogota, in conjunction with the

CNP, covered the costs of student tuition, equipment, and daily stipends for 400 qualified Afro-Colombian and indigenous candidates to attend four CNP academies. NAS was involved in identifying qualified candidates, reviewing their credentials, conducting background interviews within their communities, and providing input to the CNP.

At the CNP Academy, selectees receive one year of academic coursework, physical training, and community service instruction before beginning their careers as police officers. Upon completion of their training and graduation, the candidates improve the diversity, responsiveness, and perception of the CNP with their local communities. In time, the program will facilitate understanding between the community and police in these disadvantaged areas. In the short term, program graduates are using their police skills, shared language and culture to better meet the needs of their communities and to restore trust in law enforcement institutions.

The Beca Program is one of many ways the U.S. Embassy is engaging with minority populations in Colombia. It provides the police additional tools they can use to connect with local communities and dispel any distrust communities may harbor. ●

“NAS Bogota and CNP covered the costs of 400 qualified Afro-Colombian and indigenous candidates to attend four CNP academies.”

Enhancing Capabilities of Child and Family Protection in Uganda

To enhance the efforts of the Uganda Police Force to improve the plight of women and children with regard to gender based violence, INL recently funded a victim advocacy advisor through the 1207 Community Policing Program. Lynda Milana arrived in Uganda in January and performed an assessment of operational efficiency for the Child and Family Protection Department (CFPD). In order to obtain a full understanding of the magnitude of the issues that the national police force encounters, she traveled to the troubled north to observe the police, the available resources, and the interaction between police and citizens.

In April Ms. Milana analyzed the many responsibilities of the CFPD and recommended a total restructuring to streamline the manner in which investigations are performed, eliminate duplication of effort between the Criminal Investigations Department and CFPD, hastening the investigation of offenses, and increasing the probability of apprehension and conviction.

The restructured CFPD is recast in a support role to internal departments, requiring more focus on victim advocacy issues, community policing, and providing education and training, leading to increased interaction with the nation's police forces. They also collaborated on a domestic violence brochure to educate the officers and inform victims of their rights.

In addition to implementing the restructuring of the CFPD, Ms. Milana is helping to strengthen the capacity of the CFPD by providing mentoring with regard to administrative and operational initiatives to the senior command staff. All agree, children are Uganda's most precious resource and their future, so it is critical to ensure their safety and security through a strong and functional CFPD. ●

Local council leaders in Makindye, Uganda provide input at a meeting.



Demand Reduction Seminar for Teachers of Afghan Youths

Drug use and addiction is a growing problem among adolescents in Afghanistan, with a 2009 U.N. Survey estimating 60,000 youths affected. Without information on the dangers drugs pose and life skills for coping with social pressures, many adolescents may be unaware that drug use is harmful until it is too late. In 2010, INL sought to help the Afghan Government address this growing problem by launching a Preventive Drug Education Program (PDE) in Afghan schools with the help of the "Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific" organization, in close coordination with officials from Afghanistan's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN), initially reached 4,200 students in four of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Given the success of this initial phase, the program has expanded to reach approximately 60,000 elementary, middle, and high school students in 15 provinces during 2011.

To help launch the second phase of the program, the Colombo Plan, with INL funding, hosted a symposium from July 10–12 for 300 school principals and teachers on issues sur-

rounding drug addiction and implementation of the PDE program. Participants were given the opportunity to provide input on the lesson plans, which focus on connecting basic drug education with Islamic teachings and literacy education. The goal of the training was to gain principals' and teachers' commitment to the idea that drug prevention is better than a cure. Attendees responded positively to the message, with many noting the importance of this program as well as their gratitude for gaining valuable new information. Symposium participants devised a six-part action plan that included reaching out to target communities and implementing co-curricular activities.

Following the symposium, the 600 teachers participating in the program will receive additional training from the Colombo Plan on topics such as Afghanistan's counternarcotics law, the effects of drugs, the Islamic view of drugs, drug risk factors, self-esteem, communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, and stress management. Pleased with the overall event, attendees left optimistic about implementing the program during the upcoming school year. ●

Ambassador Michele Sison Oversees Police Program in Iraq

Ambassador Michele Sison arrived at Embassy Baghdad on July 21, 2011 to take on her new role as Assistant Chief of Mission for Law Enforcement and Rule of Law Assistance. She oversees INL's Police Development Program (PDP), as well as courts and corrections programs.

As she prepared for the launch of the PDP, Ambassador Sison met with Chief of Mission Ambassador James Jeffrey and the PDP leadership team, as well as United States Forces-Iraq, Diplomatic Security's Regional Security Officers, and other stakeholders to discuss close coordination through the transition.

Prior to Iraq, Ambassador Sison spent a year as the State Department's Director of Career Development and Assignments. She has served as U.S. Ambassador to both Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates, and she has also acted as Principal

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs and is a career member of the United States Senior Foreign Service.

As part of the transition to a civilian-led mission in Iraq, the INL-led PDP shifted U.S. responsibility for Iraqi police development from DoD to the State Department this fall.

The civilian program will partner with the Government of Iraq (GOI), specifically the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the police services, to begin a new phase of police development, one focused on strengthening high-level management and leadership capacities, and expanding technical skills in areas such as forensics and investigations. The PDP seeks to assist the GOI to establish a leading role for civilian police in providing internal security. ●